



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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DEPARTMENT ADDS 13,757 ACRES TO MALHEUR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE AND RESTORES 21,657 ACRES TO UNRESERVED PUBLIC DOMAIN

A total of 13,757.65 acres of valuable waterfowl habitat has been added to the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon by an order issued by Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton. The order also restored approximately 21,657 acres to the unreserved public domain. The lands previously had been withdrawn for classification as to their suitability for migratory bird refuge purposes.

The Secretary's action brings the total acreage in the Malheur Refuge up to 184,062.14, which includes 427 acres of leased land. The new acreage is distributed around the fringe of the refuge.

Malheur National Wildlife Refuge is one of the most important areas in the Pacific flyway as a resting and feeding ground for migratory waterfowl. Parts of the area are open to hunting at the discretion of the Department's Fish and Wildlife Service.

The value of Malheur for Wildlife was recognized as far back as 1908 when a bird reservation was established there by Executive Order. In 1935 the Malheur Migratory Bird Refuge was created and in 1940 its name was changed to the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge.

Because of the importance of Malheur, consistent efforts have been made to add suitable lands to the refuge and to provide for better utilization of the land and water resources there. Slightly more than 42,800 acres, including some of the best waterfowl area in the West, have been purchased and added to Malheur in the past 20 years. The most recent purchase authorized by the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission was an 855-acre addition recommended for purchase last May.

Lands listed in the Secretary's order total 18,017.54 but include 4,259.89 acres of public land which is already being administered as part of the refuge under an old order which is being replaced by this new withdrawal.

The order also revokes a withdrawal of approximately 22,017 acres of public lands that had formerly been withdrawn in 1932 and 1933 for classification purposes. Of the 22,017 acres of the restored lands approximately 360 acres are now in private ownership. This leaves about 21,657 acres that are restored to the vacant public domain.

Bureau of Land Management Director Edward Woozley noted that the restored lands are primarily rangelands, bearing a growth of native vegetation of sagebrush and greasewood, together with an understory of native grasses.

In restoring the released lands to the unreserved public domain, the Bureau of Land Management established October 30, 1957 as the date when applications for entry under the public land laws from veterans and others having preference rights become effective. Applications from persons not claiming preference rights will become effective on January 29, 1958.

Unless or until the restored lands are classified by BLM technicians as suitable for the use intended by the applicant, no application for entry will be approved, nor may the lands be entered upon or occupied, except for mineral purposes, Director Woozley said.

Inquiries concerning the lands may be addressed to the Manager, Land Office, United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Portland, Oregon.

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